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Attorneys

CISLO & THOMAS LLP
233 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 900
Santa Monica, California 90401-1211
Tel: (310) 451-0647
Fax: (310) 394-4477
Customer No.: 25,189
www.cislo.com

BLENDER AND MUGS

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This Application is a continuation-in-part application of U.S. Patent Application
5 Serial No. 10/649,757, filed on August 26, 2003, which is hereby incorporated by
reference.

BACKGROUND

Various devices for blending various liquids and solids have been developed
over the years. These devices have various features and options to suit a wide variety
10 of uses and applications. For example, there are many blenders that are either
handheld or freestanding devices. While these devices have been useful, these prior art
devices can be difficult to clean, use and store unused products, especially, when
preparing smaller batches. More specifically, freestanding devices can be too large and
cumbersome to use to make smaller portions and are generally better designed for
15 blending larger quantities of fluids and ingredients. Handheld units may be useful to
make individualized portions, but they may lack the power to properly blend
ingredients together. Furthermore, these handheld units are generally used with open
containers such as bowls or cups that can increase the chances of spilling or splattering
during preparation of the ingredients. Moreover, the unused portion would have to be
20 poured out of the open container and into a sealable container to be stored or to be
readily carried by a person. Accordingly, there remains a need for an individualized
blender system that may be easier to use, clean and store unused products.

SUMMARY

Exemplary embodiments disclosed here are directed to an individualized blender system. According to one exemplary embodiment, the blender system is composed of a base including a motor means, an individual-sized container and a combination blender and/or juicer canister. The base includes a body, a motor means, an agitating means coupled to the motor, a recessed well for receiving a container and a pressure-sensitive switch that selectively powers the motor means. In use, the container or canister may be placed on the base, pressure is applied to the container or canister thereby activating the motor means and agitating the contents of the container or canister. The base also includes a locking groove that permits the user to lock the container or canister on the base while keeping the motor means in the powered position.

According to one exemplary embodiment, the individually sized container may be bullet-shaped. In alternate embodiments, the container may have a cylindrical, polygonal, cubical, or pyramidal shape. Also, the container may be sealed with a simple cap or a cap having an agitating means. The container may also include a plurality of ridges that form a stable platform for standing the container like a typical drinking vessel. That is, the bullet-shape container may be inverted so that the container rests on the ridges, and the cap is readily accessible. Additionally, the container may include locking members that engage the locking grooves provided on the blender base.

According to one exemplary embodiment, the blender canister includes, at a minimum, a body, a selectively removable base having an agitating means, locking

members that engage the locking grooves provided on the blender base and a selectively removable means for sieving the container contents. In use, with the sieving means provided in the body of the blender canister, fruits and vegetables may be placed and blended within the bore of the sieving means. The pulp remaining from the fruits and vegetables remain within the bore of the sieving means and the resultant juice may be decanted from the blender canister. Alternatively, the blender canister may be used without the removable means for sieving the container contents.

According to another embodiment, a container that may be used with a mixing base has an opening at one end and a base at a second end, where the second end is tapered. The container may also include one or more locking members in spaced relation about the periphery of the container body. The container body may also include a staying means that is coupled to the exterior of the container. The container may also include a ring that is selectively attachable and removable from the periphery of the opening such that when the ring is coupled to the container, the user is able to drink from the container without spilling or dripping.

Another embodiment is directed to caps that may be coupled to one or more of the containers disclosed herein. The cap may have a generally planar top surface and at least one sidewall. The cap may be secured over the openings of the container via one or more coupling means. The cap may also include openings that are spaced about the top of the container. The openings may have varying sizes, shapes, and density on the cap depending upon the intended or desired use.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 is a perspective view of an exemplary embodiment of the blender system;

Figure 2A is a perspective view of an exemplary embodiment of an individualized blender container;

Figure 2B is an exploded perspective view of Figure 2A;

Figure 2C is an inverted perspective view of Figure 2A;

Figure 2D is a perspective view of another exemplary embodiment of an individualized blender container;

Figure 3 is a perspective view of an exemplary embodiment of a blender base;

Figure 4 is a top plan view of Figure 3;

Figure 5 is a cross-sectional view of an exemplary embodiment of a blender base taken along line 5-5 of Figure 4;

Figure 6 is a cross-sectional view of an exemplary embodiment of a blender base taken along line 6-6 of Figure 5;

Figure 7 is a side view of an exemplary embodiment of a blender container;

Figure 8 is a perspective view of an exemplary embodiment of a blender container;

Figure 9 is a perspective view of an exemplary embodiment of blender container base;

Figure 10 is a cross-sectional view of an exemplary embodiment of blender container taken along line 10-10 of Figure 7;

Figure 11 is a perspective view of one embodiment of a mug that may be used with the blender;

Figure 12 is a perspective view of the embodiment of Figure 11 with an exemplary embodiment of a ring removed from the mug;

5 Figure 13 is a bottom perspective view of ring of Figure 12;

Figure 14 is a perspective view of one embodiment of a mug that is coupled to a blender base;

Figure 15 is a perspective view of a top for a blender container; and

Figure 16 is another embodiment of a top for a blender container.

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The detailed description set forth below in connection with the appended drawings is intended as a description of exemplary embodiments and is not intended to represent the only forms in which the exemplary embodiments may be constructed
15 and/or utilized.

Turning to the drawings, Figure 1 is directed to an exemplary embodiment of an individualized blender system. More specifically, Figure 1 shows a container **101** engaged to a blender base **100** and a blender container **106**. As shown in the exemplary embodiment of Figure 1, the container **101** is a bullet-shaped container. As those
20 skilled in the art will appreciate, the container **101** may have a plurality of shapes known or developed in the art. Also, the container **101** may include a plurality of ridges **102** provided on the outer surface of the container **101**. The container **101** also includes a means for agitating **108** the contents of the container. The means for

agitating **108** the container contents can be a blade element coupled to an impeller in a shaft or other transmission means. The blade element may have one, two, three, four, or more cutting elements. The cutting elements are generally flat members that may have sharpened edges, pointed tips, and one or more bends along the surface of the cutting elements.

The blender container **106** also includes a base **110**, selectively removable lid **104**, **105**, and a base member **110** that is coupled to an agitating means **108**. As shown in Figure 1, the lid is composed of two components, but it is contemplated that a one-piece or multi-piece cap may also be used. The lid **104** may be locked on to the opening of the container **106** via a cap-locking member **107**. The cap-locking member **107** may be an L-shaped ridge located at the lip of the container **106**. The cap-locking member **107** engages a corresponding member (not shown) on the lid **104** in order to securely fix the lid **104** to the container **106**.

According to one exemplary embodiment, the blender container **106** may include a juicer element **111**. The juicer element **111** is composed of a main body **113** and a plurality of sieve elements **114** spaced about the periphery of the main body **113**. According to the exemplary embodiment depicted in Figure 1, the juicer element **111** may also include a funnel **112** at one end of the main body **113**. Additionally, the juicer element **111** may also include an annular stop member **115** positioned at one end of the juicer so as to prevent over-insertion of the juicer element **111** into the blender container **106**.

Figures 2A through 2C illustrate various views of the individualized container **101**. That is, an individualized container **101** is sized for smaller servings that would be prepared/consumed by one and/or a few individuals. As shown in Figure 2A, the container **101** is resting on external ridges **102**. The external ridges **102** are shaped so as to permit the container **101** to rest on the apex of the container **101** without tipping over. As those skilled in the art will appreciate, the number of ridges **102** may be varied from what is depicted so long as the container **101** can stand upright on a substantially flat surface. As shown in Figure 2A, the container **101** may be used as a drinking vessel. That is, an individual may blend contents of the container **101**, remove the container **101**, base **100**, access the contents of the container, and secure the cap **200** onto the container **101** to store for later use.

In one configuration, the container **101** may be also enclosed with a cap **200**. In an alternate configuration, the container **101** may be enclosed with a base **202** having an agitating means **203** as shown in Figure 2D. As shown in Figure 2C, the cap **200** may be affixed to the opening of the container **101** by threads **204**. As those skilled in the art will appreciate, the cap **200** may be secured to the container **101** by various known and developed means such as, but not limited to, a friction fit or a snap-fit. As shown in Figure 2B, the container **101** is inverted and may rest on the cap **200**.

Figure 2D illustrates an alternate embodiment of the container **101** having a larger volume as compared to the embodiments depicted in Figures 2A-2C. Also, the base **202** includes another exemplary embodiment of an agitating means **203**. Additionally, as shown in Figures 2A through 2C, the container **101** includes locking

members **201** that are spaced about the periphery of the container **101**. The locking members **201** allow the user to operate the blender without requiring the constant application of force to the container (in order to keep the motor means switched on).

Figure 3 is directed to the base **100** and the various components that are associated with the base's recessed well **300**. The base **100** includes a motor means (not shown) that is coupled to an impeller **301**. The impeller **301** includes a plurality of blades **303** that radiate from the center of the impeller **301**. Along the periphery of the recessed well **300**, a plurality of bushings **305** may be placed about the periphery of the recessed well **300**. In another exemplary embodiment of the base **100**, the base does not include the bushings **305**. The bushings **305** may be made from a generally resilient material such as, but not limited to, rubber or silicone that may serve to reduce the vibrations during the agitation of the container contents. Also, as shown in Figure 3, the recessed well **300** includes a plurality of pressure-activated switches **302**. In use, the weight of the container **101** or the blender container **106** causes the downward movement of the switch **302** thereby activating the motor means. As shown in Figure 3, a locking groove **304** may be provided adjacent to the switch **302**. Accordingly, in use, when the locking members **201** contact and depress the switch **302**, the container **101**, **106** may be rotated such that the locking member **201** engages the locking groove **304**. That is, as shown in Figure 6, when a force F_1 is applied to the switch **302**, the switch **302** moves downward. This downward motion causes the cam **600** on the switch **302** to contact a switching means **501** that is connected to the motor **500** thereby powering the motor. Accordingly, depending on the intended use or application, the

container **101**, **106** may be depressed to activate the motor **500** for short periods of time. Alternatively, the container **101**, **106** may be depressed and rotated slightly so as to allow the locking members **201** to engage the locking groove **304** to permit the continued operation of the motor **500** without requiring the user to exert constant
5 pressure to keep the motor powered.

Figure 7 is directed to an exemplary embodiment of the blender container **106**. The blender container **106** comprises a main body that defines a volume and a lid **104**, **105** that is affixed thereto. The lid includes a plurality of openings **700** that may be used to decant the contents of the container **106** while the lid **104** remains affixed to the
10 container **106**. The blender container **106** also includes a base **110**. The base **110** is sized to fit within the recessed well **300**. Also, the base **110** is coupled to the container **106** by a screw-fit relation. The base **110** also includes an agitating means **108**, as shown in Figure 9. Turning back to Figure 7, the blender container **106** also includes a plurality of locking members **109** spaced about the periphery of the blender container
15 **106** near the base **110** of the container **106**. As shown in the exemplary blender container **106** depicted in Figure 7, a juicer **111** may be provided within the body of the blender container **106**. As those skilled in the art will appreciate, the blender container **106** may be used without the juicer **111**. The blender container **106** may include a handle **800** and a spout **801** that facilitates the decanting of the contents of the
20 container.

Figure 10 illustrates the cross-sectional view of the blender container **106**. The cross-sectional view shows the juicer element **111** placed within the body of the blender

container **106**. As shown in Figure 10, the juicer element **111** is secured to the bottom of the blender container **106**. Additionally, the bore of the juicer **111** may be accessed by removing cap element **105**. In use, fruits and/or vegetables may be placed into the bore **1003** of the juicer **111**. Rotation of the motor means is transmitted through shaft **1000** and mating impeller **1001** thereby transmitting a rotational force to the agitating means **108**. The contents of the juicer **1003** are then blended thereby causing the resulting juice to move from the bore **1003** into the container body **1002** through the sieve elements **114**. The remaining pulp is separated and trapped within the bore **1003** of the juicer **111**. By providing a two-part cap **104**, **105**, an individual user can access the bore **1003** of the juicer **111** without removing the entire cap or stopping the machine for fear of spillage or splattering. For example, the individual user may remove cap **105** to access the bore **1003** of the juicer **111** to add more products for juice extraction. The resulting juice that is located within the space **1002** may be decanted from the container without removing the lid through the openings.

Figure 11 illustrates one embodiment of a mug-type container **1100**. The container **1100** includes at least one wall **1101** that defines a fluid containing area. As shown in the figure, the wall **1101** may be slightly tapered when moving from the mouth of the container **1100** to the base of the container **1100**. The container **1100** also includes a mean for grasping or holding the container **1102**. In another embodiment, the means may be a handle **1102**, which is fixed to the outer wall **1101**. In one embodiment, the handle **1102** is a generally U-shaped. In other exemplary

The container **1100** also includes a plurality of locking members **1104** that are positioned about the periphery of the container **1100**. In one embodiment, the locking members **1104** are protuberances that extend substantially perpendicular from the wall **1101** of the container **1100**. Also as shown in Figure 11, the members **1104** have a generally rectangular shape. As those skilled in the art will appreciate, locking members **1104** may have a plurality of different shapes.

As shown in Figure 12, the container **1100** is provided with a plurality of threads **1200** on the outer wall **1101** that allow the ring **1103** to be coupled to the container **1100**. As shown in the embodiment depicted in Figure 11, the members **1104** may be coupled to a ring-shaped ridge **1105**. The ridge **1105** may also serve as a stop so that the ring **1103** is not over threaded beyond the opening of the container **1100**.

The container **1100** may also include a ring **1103** that is positioned atop the mouth of the container **1100**. The ring **1103** may be fixed to the container **1100** via threads or other coupling means known or developed in the art. Figure 13 shows one embodiment of the ring **1103** that may be coupled to the mouth of the container **1100**. In one embodiment, the ring **1103** is a generally cylindrical wall having an outer surface and inner surface. The ring **1103** may include a plurality of threads **1300** that are found on the inner surface of the ring **1103**. In another embodiment, the ring **1103** includes a top surface or lip that is coupled to the wall of the ring **1300**. The ring **1103** may be coupled over the threads **1200** of the container **1100** so that it is easier for an individual to drink from the container **1100**.

may be coupled over the threads **1200** of the container **1100** so that it is easier for an individual to drink from the container **1100**.

Figure 14 illustrates one exemplary embodiment of the container **1100** as fixed to a blender base **110**. According to one embodiment, the container **1100** is inverted and threadedly coupled to the blender base **110**. The container **1100** may then be inserted into the recess well **300** of the blender base of a blender **100**. As shown in Figure 14, the base of the container **1100** is slightly tapered. The taper of the container **1100** creates a dome-like structure that facilitates the blending of the contents of the container **1100**.

Figures 15 and 16 illustrate exemplary embodiments of a container cap **1500**, **1600**, respectively, that may be coupled to a container **101**, **1100**. The cap **1500**, **1600** contains a generally planar top surface **1502**, **1103** and at least one sidewall **1503**, **1604**. According to various embodiments, the tops **1002**, **1603** of the container cap **1500**, **1600** and the sidewalls **1503**, **1604** are generally perpendicular to one another. As those skilled in the art will appreciate, the caps **1500**, **1600** may secure to the containers **101**, **1100** by a coupling means. In another embodiment, the coupling means may be ridges for a snap fit. In one embodiment, a plurality of threads (not shown) may be provided on the inner surface of the wall **1503**, **1604**. The threads are sized to engage the threads that are on the plurality of the containers **101**, **1100** that are described herein.

As shown in Figure 15, the container may include a plurality of openings **1501** that are spaced about the top of the container cap **1500**. The openings **1501** may have

varying sizes, shapes, and density on the cap **1500**. As shown in Figures 15 and 16, these openings **1501**, **1601**, **1602** are generally circular in shape. As those skilled in the art will appreciate, these openings **1501**, **1601**, **1602** may have a plurality of different shapes known or developed in the art. Furthermore, the clustering or density of the openings on the cap **1500**, **1600** may be varied depending upon intended use of the container cap **1500**, **1600**. For instance, the cap **1500**, as shown in Figure 15, may be used for shaking out large or coarse items that are contained within the container **1500**. In Figure 16, the openings **1601**, **1602** being in closer proximity to each other may be useful for those blended items that have a smaller diameter or that may be poured or strained out of the container **1100**.

In closing, it is understood that the embodiments described herein are merely illustrative of the principles of these varying embodiments. Other modifications that may be made are within the scope of these embodiments described herein. Thus, by way of example, but not of limitation, alternative configurations may be utilized in accordance with the teachings herein. Accordingly, the drawings and description are illustrative and not meant to be a limitation thereof.